A MARSHALL CAVENDISH PUBLICATION 33 IN FORTNIGHTLY PARTS

The Ancestral Trail

CYBER CHALLENGE IN THE NEXT DIMENSION

33 Terraforma, Enviromorpher

Trapped in the lair of the land changer

Julek Heller

UK £1.75 IR £1.75
Australia $4.50 NZ $5.50 Singapore $4.95 Malaysia MYR6.95 Malta £M1.50

In the thirty-third sector

11001 01111 10101 10010 00101 01110
00101 01101 11001 10011 10011 10100
10010 00101 01110 00111 10100
01000 10111 01001 01100 01100
00010 00101 11001 01111 10101
10010 00110 10010 01001 00101
01110 00100

Even as Richard's panic rose, Robo's calm metallic voice sliced through his fear. "Souls' body mass composed of anti-matter," Robo advised. "Avoid contact with matter."

The great head billowed and spoke. "Join us, Chosen One. Join ussss."

Richard gasped as the Souls formed a huge serpent of smoke, its grinning head hanging over him and its body looped in thick coils on the floor.

"Anti-matter…" Richard thought aloud. "Let's see what happens when anti-matter meets matter."

His hand reached out behind him and closed on one of the fragments of the crystal spheres. Quicker than thought, he hurled the glittering handful straight into the serpent's head.

The ground shook as a tremendous explosion devastated The Library.

Like the fuse of a firework, the serpent's head began to glow and sparkle with tiny bursts of flame as matter violently collided with anti-matter and was sucked away into another dimension.

INTO THE LIGHT

A tightly-packed clump of Souls vaporized in a silent explosion which blew out a section of wall, bathing the chamber in suffused light. As Richard and Robo ducked through the hole, the flaming line of destruction continued down the serpent's neck towards the concentrated mass of its body.

As the fleeing pair hurled themselves to safety, Richard could not help smiling. Hovering patiently outside the rapidly disintegrating shell of The Library was the familiar form of the cyber cruiser.

Within moments, Richard and Robo were sitting atop the flying machine and jetting away from the violent explosions which rocked the ground beneath them. As the carnage behind them gradually receded into the distance, the pair travelled on for a long time in silence. Then Richard spotted something.

Pipe city

"Look over there, Robo!" he cried. Below them the landscape had changed. They were now flying over a gigantic network of pipes, which criss-crossed over a complex web of canals.

"Pipe City," announced Robo. "Here Chosen One must seek Omni piece."

"Look!" Richard shouted excitedly. "There's a landing pad!"

Ahead of them, among the tangle of pipes and canals, was a flat area marked with a cross. As they brought the cyber cruiser down, they could see the true size of the transparent pipes.

"Pipes contain toxic waste. Narrow gauge pipes contain fast-moving air. Purpose unknown," Robo said.

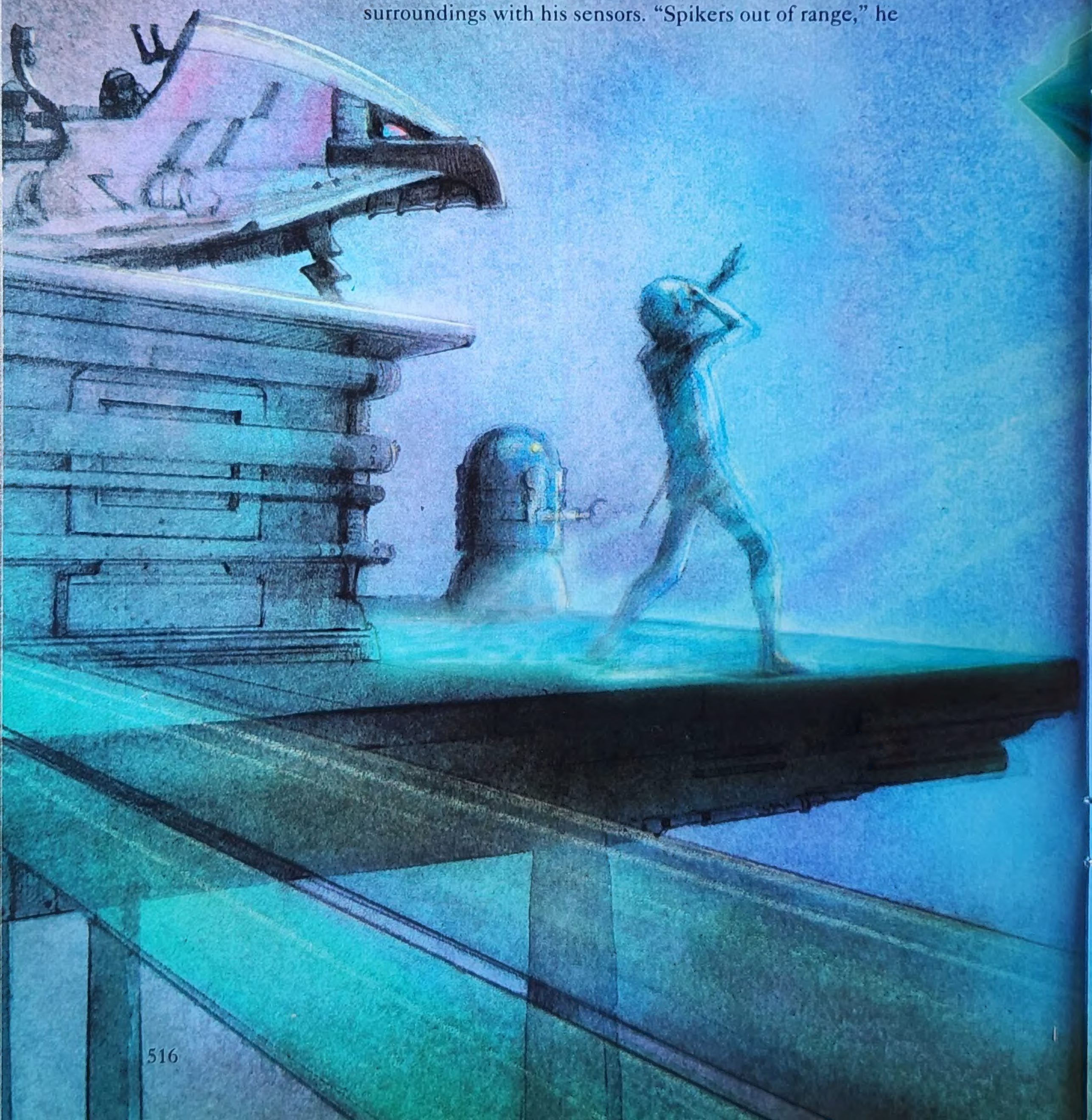
From behind him could be heard a faint scraping noise. He spun round and saw half a dozen cone-shaped creatures with crablike legs scuttle into view.

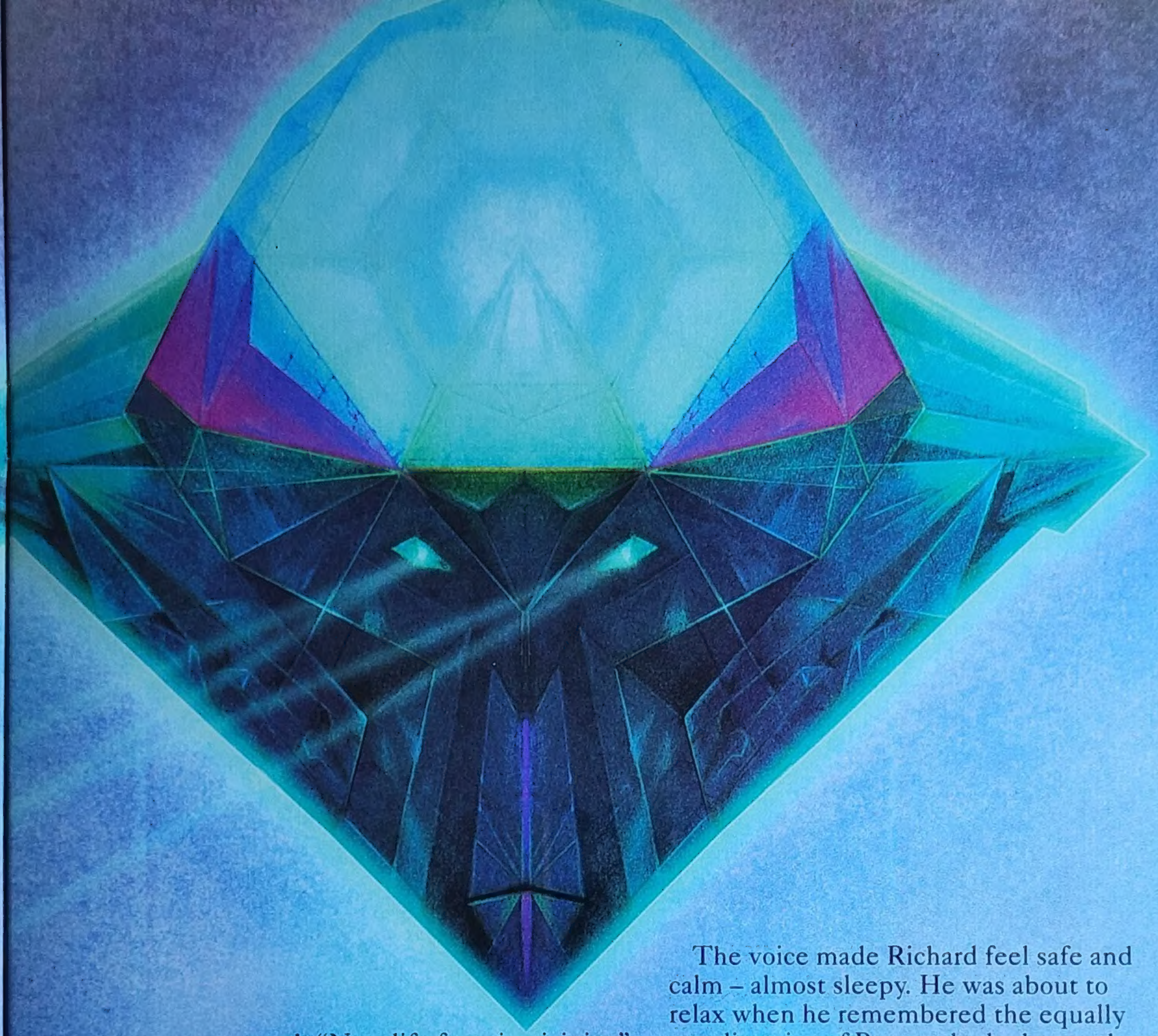
"Spikers approaching," Robo said. "Attracted by movement. When within range, Spikers eject high-powered plasma spears."

To provide the proof of Robo's words, a dagger of gleaming matter suddenly shot past Richard's head. Without hesitating, he turned and ran.

Richard knew that his armour would be no protection against the deadly plasma spears. He had to get out of range. Ducking and scrambling, he ran deeper into the maze of pipes. Robo followed, careering desperately through the air. Soon the pair were hopelessly lost.

At last they broke through into an open space. A humming sound could be heard as Robo scanned their new surroundings with his sensors. "Spikers out of range," he





announced. "New life form in vicinity."

It was only then that Richard realized that the humming noise was not coming from the direction of Robo.

False sense of security

In the centre of the clearing, a gigantic, glowing crystal floated in mid-air. Within its angular features, a humanoid face could be clearly seen. Cold intelligence stared out of a pair of gloating eyes. Its translucent, glowing body pulsed with surges of electrical energy.

"Welcome to my domain, Chosen One," said the crystal, in a deep, soothing voice. "I am Terraforma, enviromorph. A splendid time is guaranteed for all."

The voice made Richard feel safe and calm – almost sleepy. He was about to relax when he remembered the equally angelic voice of Peter, who had turned out to be the soul of evil.

"Enviromorph? What does that mean?" he asked, gazing with suspicion at the heart of the giant crystal as it glowed and dimmed in time with the rhythmic rise and fall of its tuneful humming.

At that moment, a beeping sound alerted Richard's attention. A new message had appeared on Robo's binary panel. Instinctively, Richard tried to decode the binary numbers.

His efforts were to no avail. Against his will, his eyes were dragged back to the hypnotic pulsing of Terraforma. He made a huge effort, struggling to keep his thoughts together, but the glow locked his eyes and numbed his senses.

Terraforma spoke again in his most reassuring tones. "I shape the environment. Come closer, Chosen One. They say a change is as good as a rest."

The pulsing intensified.

Like a sleepwalker, Richard stepped forward, straight into a beam of deep red light which suddenly sprang from the centre of Terraforma's glowing heart.

Without warning, the world exploded into fire. Richard found himself standing in an inferno as the ground burned beneath his feet and the very air blazed.

Fire and ice

Terraforma spoke again. This time there was no attempt to reassure Richard.

"A little cold comfort for you, perhaps, Chosen One?"

With hopeless courage, Richard put his hand to the handle of his sword.

As he did so, Terraforma glowed brightly again and the fiery landscape was transformed once more.

Instead of an inferno, Richard was now standing in an icy Arctic terrain. Cold lanced through his fingertips and his sword froze solidly into its scabbard. Richard shivered with the intense cold.

Unlikely Salvation

Richard knew that he would not be able to withstand any more of these sudden temperature changes. With agonizing slowness he turned his head to call Robo.

By chance, Richard's eyes focused on the robot's binary panel. The message was just visible through the sheet of flame that completely enveloped Robo from his domed head to his squat base.

With a speed generated by fear, Richard frantically decoded the message and shouted out. "Robo! The Spikers! Are there any about?"

"Herd of Spikers in close range. Advise Chosen One remain motionless."

"Well, that shouldn't be difficult," mused Richard. "I'm frozen stiff."

"Robo, you've got to get them over here. Can you move?"

"Affirmative," Robo answered and began to swing jerkily back and forth, just above the fiercely burning ground.

Suddenly, the Spikers appeared. Robo shot straight upwards and the Spikers hesitated only momentarily before they brushed past Richard's immobile form towards the spinning crystal.

The crystal was surrounded by Spikers. At an invisible signal, the herd launched a deadly rain of destructive plasma spears. Several of them ricocheted off the spinning facets and flew screaming through the frozen air. One of them caught Robo a glancing blow and knocked him head over heels.

Terraforma began to retreat under the hail of spikes. The enviromorph managed to get quite a distance away before one of the spears flew, straight and true, right into the heart of the living crystal.

Crystal destruction

Terraforma shattered in a glittering cloud of razor-edged shards. In an instant, the temperature returned to normal and the familiar mechanized landscape of Pipe City reappeared. In front of them lay a

building shaped like a crouching spider.

Richard's armour thawed and he found that he could move again. He ran over to Robo. "Are you all right?" he asked anxiously, setting the robot upright. "Circuits undamaged by cold and Spiker strike. Chosen One must retrieve Omni piece from Citadel. Advise immediate evacuation of area. Spikers returning."

Sure enough, the herd of deadly spikers scuttled into view.

"Quick!" yelled Richard. "Into that pipe over there!"

Escape

A few steps away from them was the open end of one of the air pipes.

"Robo!" he called. "Jump in fast!'

The pair dashed to the open pipe and dived in headfirst.

It was like being sucked up by a giant vacuum cleaner. A blast of air dragged them away through the pipes at a speed that felt like the cyber cruiser in top gear. Richard's hurtling body did not even touch the walls in the headlong rush.

The journey through Pipe City seemed to last a lifetime. The winds roared around them deafeningly. To his horror, he began to spin like a bullet in the barrel of a gun.

Just as Richard thought he was going to pass out, he and Robo shot out of the end of the pipe and began a long, slow fall through the air. Their unpleasant journey was coming to an end.

Hidden power

The danger was not yet over. Below them was one of the waterways filled with glutinous toxic waste. By chance, they were falling towards a platform floating directly beneath the open mouth of the pipe. As Richard hit the platform, it tilted sharply and he slid over the edge into the heaving toxic canal.

Flexible cables tipped with rubber suckers shot out from Robo's outer casing and gripped Richard's body armour, arresting his fall just above the surface of the poisonous fluid.

Richard gasped in amazement. "I didn't know you could do that, Robo!" he said.

"Can only support Chosen One's body weight for short period of time. Must land immediately," replied the robot, its internal motors emitting a high-pitched whine as Richard hung from the rubber suckers.

With a thud, Robo set Richard down on the ground. He looked around and found himself standing outside a grand, pillared entrance at the top of a flight of steps. Their express trip had brought them to the gates of the Citadel.

Richard walked up and peered in through a pair of enormous double doors. In the exact centre of a huge chamber was a large glass dome on a circular plinth. Waves of energy danced inside the dome, spinning in an endless optical whirlpool.

Richard's footsteps echoed in the silence as he walked all the way around. "Robo, what is this?" he asked, pointing at the dome.

There was a pause. "Unable to answer," replied the robot at last. "Sensors repelled by unknown substance."

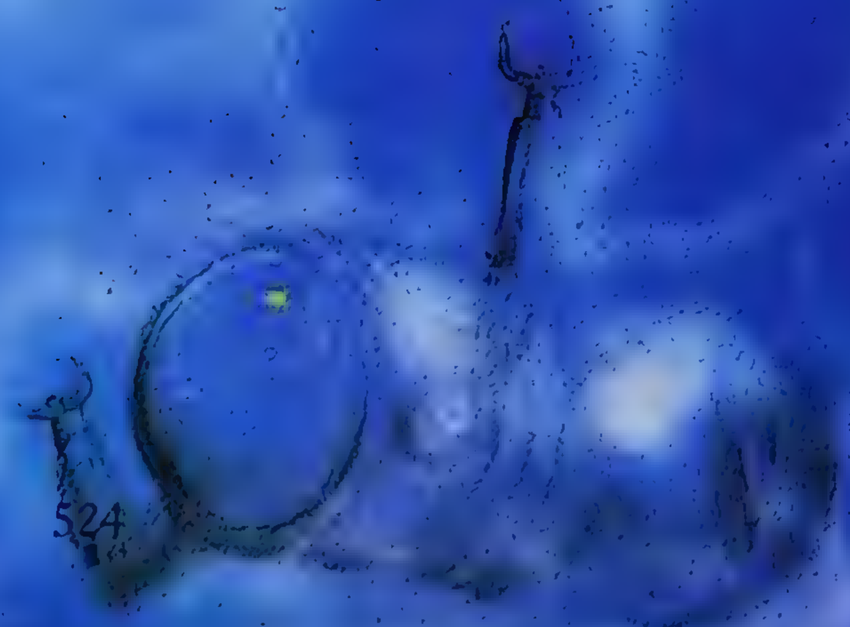
"Weird," said Richard. He stepped cautiously on to the plinth and, when nothing happened, leaned forward and tapped on the glass with his finger.

The Keeper awakes

Without warning, a bolt of pure energy burst out from within the glass, knocking Richard backwards on to the floor. Robo moved forward to help him and a second energy bolt sent the robot spinning through the air.

There was a crash as the great double doors slammed shut. The air was filled with an hydraulic roar as the glass dome began to rise. From beneath it, a large, metallic object emerged that served as a body. Awestruck, Richard realized that floating inside the glass dome was a single huge eye.

"The sanctity of the Citadel has been broken," boomed the creature. "Who dares defile the Cyber Citadel?"



"The defiler must answer the Keeper's challenge. This is the Law."

"Computerized construction…".

"Robots may not speak within the Citadel," The creature cut Robo short. "That is the Law."

A bolt of energy lanced out from the Keeper and Robo was enmeshed in a fine web of glowing blue lines. His panel lights blinked out and the robot went silent.

Horrified, Richard turned back to the Keeper. "You've destroyed my robot," he shouted angrily.

"Robots must be deactivated within the Citadel. This is the Law," thundered the Keeper. "Now answer my challenge."

Richard stared at the creature. "I am ready to meet your challenge," he said defiantly. "First reactivate the robot. Let Robo wait outside the Citadel."

The Keeper pondered for a moment. "Inside Citadel, deactivate robots. Outside, activate robots. Data computes."

The doors swung open and an energy beam deposited Robo at the foot of the steps. The web of blue lines faded.

The Keeper turned back to Richard. "The challenge consists of three questions. You must answer each within five time units. If you fail to answer, you lose. If you lie, you lose. That is the Law."

"If I answer all three questions truthfully," Richard said. "What happens then?"

"You will win. That is the Law."

"Do I go free if I win the challenge?"

"No. Whoever defiles the Citadel must be destroyed. That is the Law."

Laws of Logic

Richard realized that the Keeper could not step outside its strange laws. Perhaps this could be its weakness.

"I am ready to begin the challenge," he said calmly.

"First question. What is your name?"

"I am Richard," he answered warily. Surely all the questions couldn't be this simple. There had to be a catch.

"Second question. Are you the Chosen One?"

"Yes," Richard replied, tensing himself for the third and final question.

"Third question. What is inside of you?"

Richard was baffled. What did the creature mean? The seconds ticked by. Three… Two… One… His time had run out. The energy waves inside the dome began to vibrate madly.

"Wait! Wait!" Richard cried frantically. "Let me ask one question."

The Keeper hesitated. "Very well. One question is permitted. That is the Law."

"I always lie – and that's the truth," Richard informed the Keeper. "Do I now speak the truth?"

There was a long silence.

From within the Keeper a deep groan could be heard. "Chosen One!" it growled. "You have tricked me. There is no answer to this question!"

"You must answer," Richard said. "That is the Law!"

"Cannot answer," came the confused response. "Paradox. Answer. Yes. No. Yes. No. Yes. No. Yes. No. Yes. Yes. No. No."

Steam began to rise from the Keeper as its circuits desperately sought an answer to Richard's unanswerable question.

Meltdown

As the creature pondered the problem, the energy waves in its glass dome began to break up. Power was being diverted along channels that were never intended to take that kind of load.

All at once, a wave of intense heat filled the interior of the chamber. The Keeper's cooling systems were at overload. It was breaking up.

Richard watched in awe as the great glass dome melted like an ice cream on a summer's day. The air filled with the smell of burning and a buzzing noise began, which rose higher and higher. With a final shriek of "Truth... Lie... Truth... Lie..." the Keeper imploded in a shower of multi-coloured, glowing sparks.

Discovery

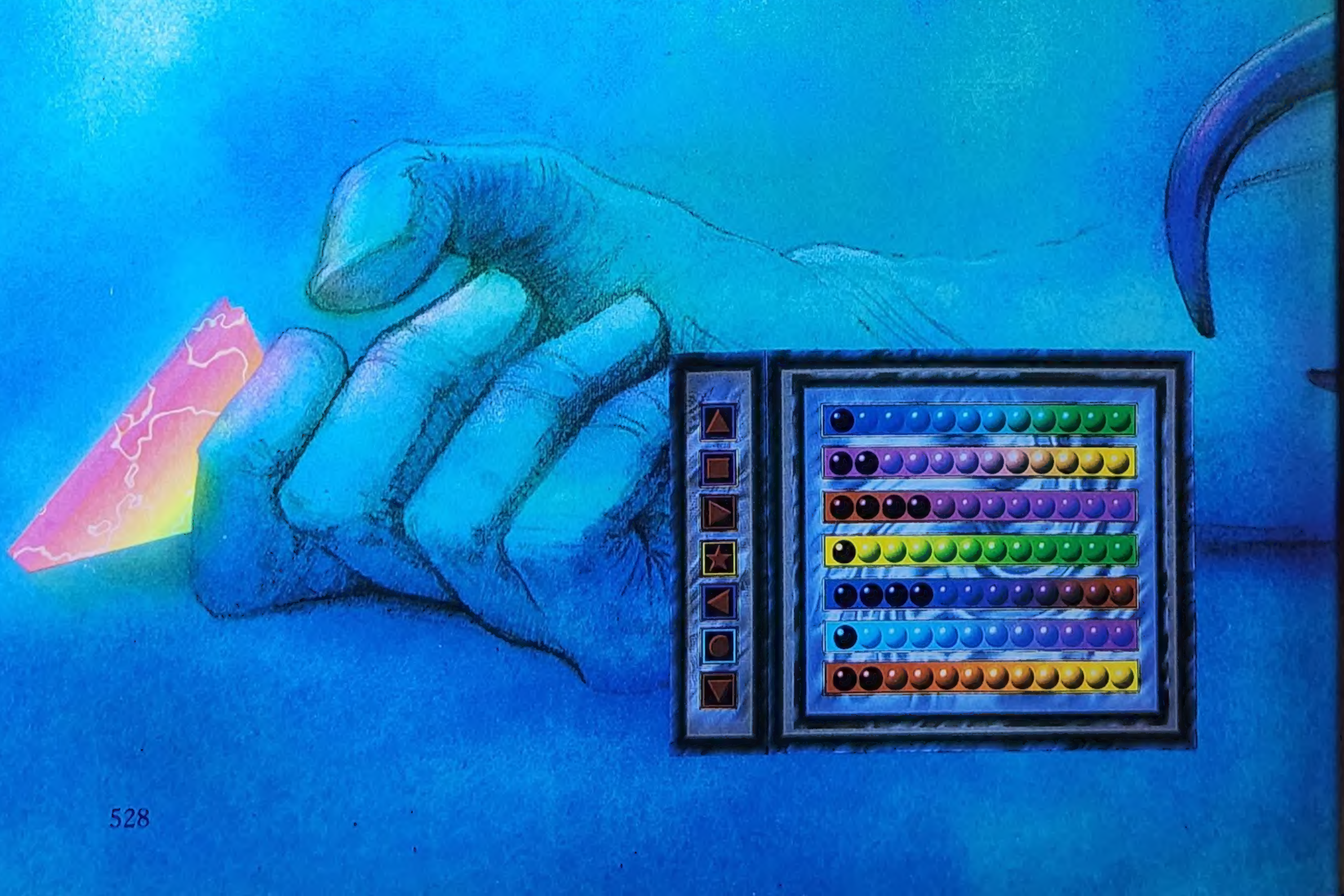
Robo's voice broke the silence. "You are truly the Chosen One."

The remains of the Keeper lay on the floor in a melted mess. Yet unharmed amid the carnage lay a small, glittering triangle.

"Omni piece," Robo announced.

Richard stretched out a hand towards the shining object and carefully plucked it from the wreckage.

Suddenly, he felt faint. Without warning, the strength drained from Richard's body. His knees buckled and he collapsed unconscious on to the floor.



SHOOMI'S SANCTUARY

Enter into the Cyber Dimension and engage optical recognition to find...

▶ Shoomi and Shoobi

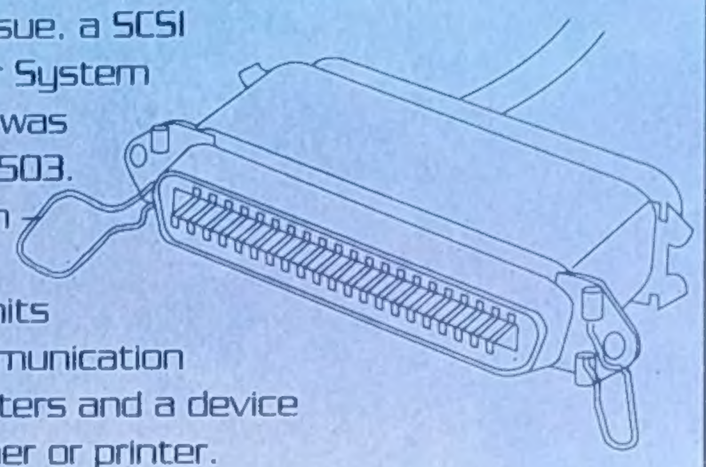
Richard and Robo's persistent followers are still hot on their trail. Hidden away somewhere in this issue are Shoomi and Shoobi. Can you use your powers of observation to find them?

In issue 32 Shoomi and Shoobi were on page 502.

▶ Computer Challenge

Another vitally important computer component from the sinister *Cyber Dimension* has been hidden in this issue. Help Richard and Robo locate it in less than three minutes.

When you have discovered the component's hiding place, can you guess what it is and what its function might be?



In last week's issue, a SCSI (Small Computer System Interface) cable was hidden on page 503. The SCSI system – pronounced skuh-zee – permits high-speed communication between computers and a device such as a scanner or printer.

Every SCSI has an ID number from 0 to 7 that you can change if necessary. The higher the number, the higher the device's priority if two or more SCSI devices are linked to a computer.

What this means is that the SCSI system enables you to link – or daisy chain – up to seven different devices to a computer and have complete control over them.

▶ Mainframe Control

In this issue you will find two more *Mainframe Control* playing pieces. You now have the complete set of pieces. In later issues you will receive the three remaining game board segments. These will be followed by a special instruction booklet that explains all the rules to *Mainframe Control* and *Cyber Chess*.

HOW TO CONTINUE YOUR COLLECTION

Most of our customers prefer to collect issues from their newsagent by placing a regular order. To help you collect THE ANCESTRAL TRAIL we are pleased to offer the following services:

DIRECT TO YOUR DOOR
Each issue costs £1.75 (IR £1.75). NB We offer a full subscription service in the UK. Issues are sent to your home POST FREE and will be dispatched to arrive on the day of publication.

SUBSCRIPTION
Each issue costs £1.75 (IR£1.75). NB We require a minimum order of 10 issues for subscription. POSTAGE IS FREE. Please mark your envelope THE ANCESTRAL TRAIL SUBSCRIPTIONS.

MISSING ANY ISSUES?
If you have missed any issues in your collection, we can supply them through our Back Numbers Dept. NB Orders are subject to availability.

BACK NUMBERS
Each issue costs £1.75 (IR£1.75) including p&p. Please mark your envelope THE ANCESTRAL TRAIL BACK NUMBERS.

HOW TO PAY
Payment should be made by cheque or postal order (made payable to Marshall Cavendish Partworks Ltd) to: MARSHALL CAVENDISH, MARLBOROUGH ROAD, ALDBOURNE, MARLBOROUGH, WILTSHIRE SN8 2HP. Telephone 0672 40776.

In the following countries, services are available as in the UK:

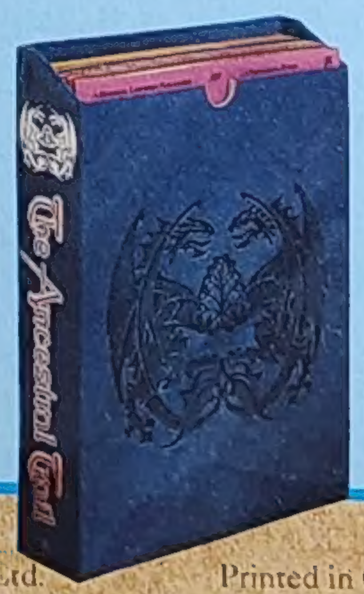
AUSTRALIA
Back Numbers Send cover price plus 95¢ p&h per issue to Gordon & Gotch Ltd, PO Box 290, Burwood, Victoria 3125.
Slipcase Send $13.95. Make cheques payable to Gordon & Gotch Ltd.

NEW ZEALAND
Back Numbers Send cover price to Gordon & Gotch (NZ) Ltd, PO Box 584, Auckland.
Slipcase Send $17.95.

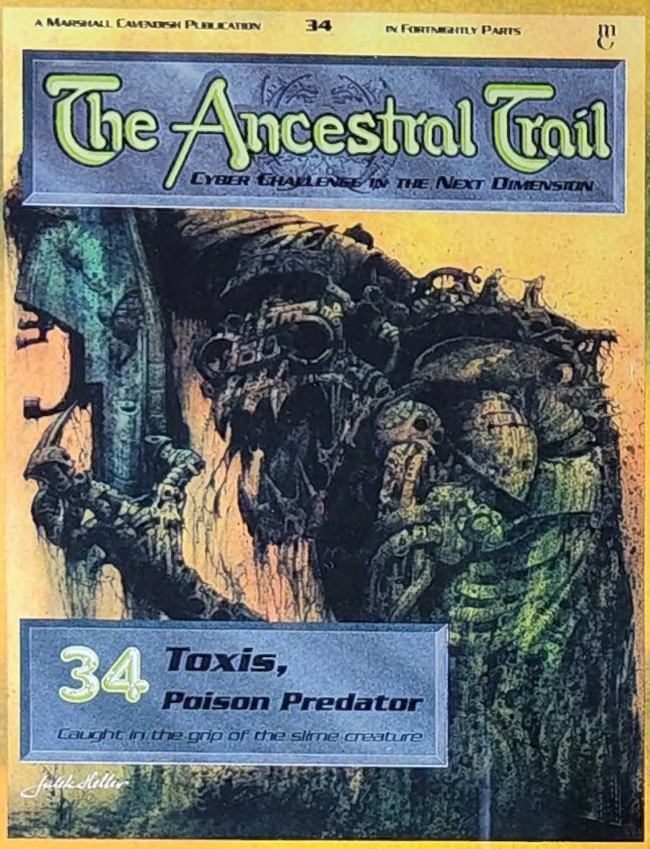
MALTA
Back Numbers and Slipcase Available through your newsagent.

SLIPCASE

You can order the slipcase to preserve your copies of THE ANCESTRAL TRAIL. The slipcase holds 26 issues and costs £5.95 (IR£5.95) including p&p. Please mark your envelope THE ANCESTRAL TRAIL SLIPCASE.



© Marshall Cavendish Ltd 1994 From an original idea by Frank Graves. Published by Marshall Cavendish Partworks Ltd, 119 Wardour Street, London W1V 3TD Colour by Bright Arts Ltd. Typeset output by Litho Link Ltd. Printed in Great Britain.



In Issue 34

Toxis, Poison Predator

With Robo at his side, Richard is forced to seek a special potion which will free an awesome creature of the deep.

plus

- Another **Techscan** card for you to cut out and collect.
- 4 More **Cyber Power** cards to add to your collection.
- First playing pieces for the **Cyber Chess** game.

Coming in Issue 35

Identico, Deadly Replicator

Richard and Robo find themselves trapped in an alien world. To escape they must withstand the power of an living cloning machine.

plus

2 more **Techscan** cards ▶ 2 more **Cyber Power** cards ▶ More **Cyber Chess** playing pieces.

ISBN 0-7485-4217-5
9 780748 542178